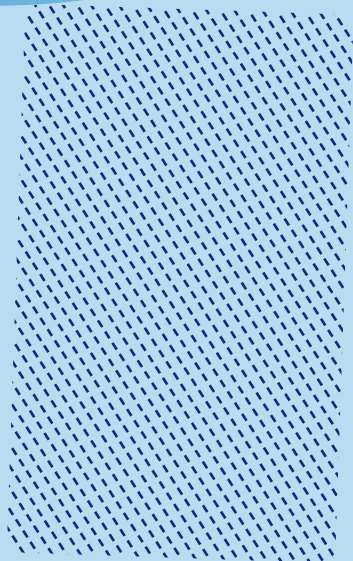
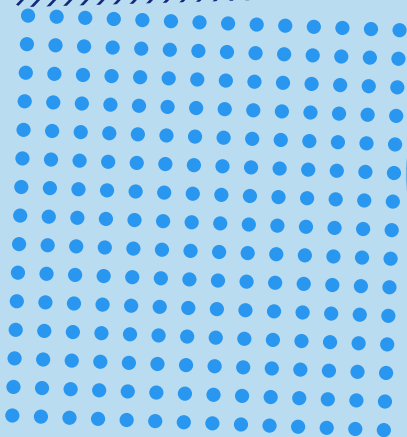




World
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**WORLD
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**FUNDING
RECOMMENDATIONS
2025**

SUPPORTING ARTISTIC VISIONS

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PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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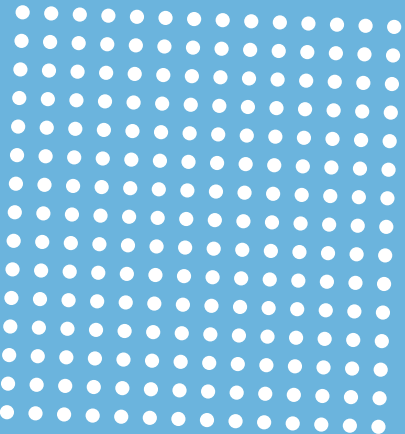
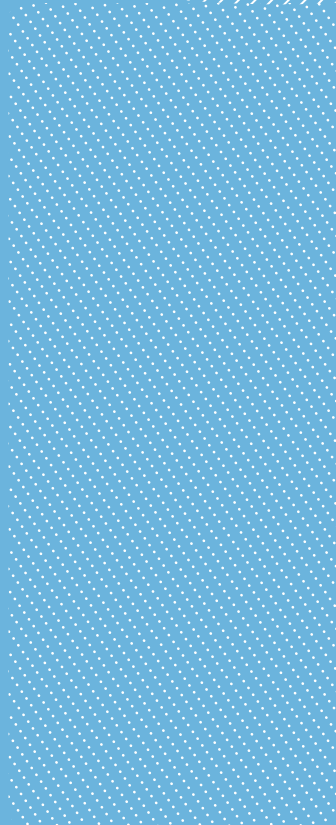
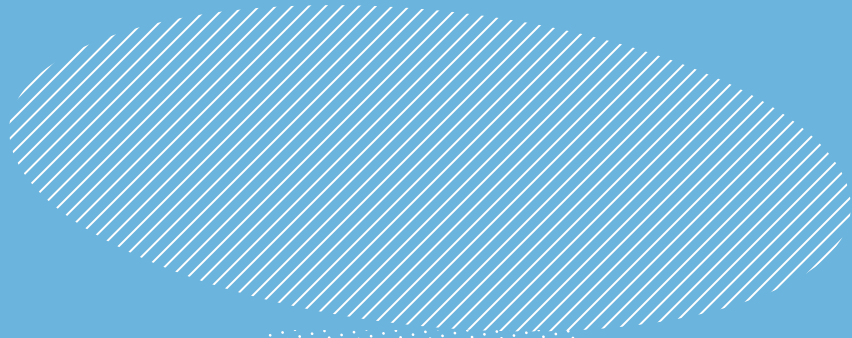


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WCF CLASSIC PRODUCTION SUPPORT





BLUE CARD

Abdullah
by Mohammed Alomd'a

SUDAN

Synopsis After the latest war breakthrough in Sudan, Abdullah (24) abandons his family in Khartoum to rescue himself; as they refuse to leave, he flees illegally to Egypt, reaching a Sudanese neighborhood in Cairo. To survive, he accepts a demeaning job as a caregiver in a nursing home. A few weeks later, Abdullah receives the news of his family's loss. Consequently, the neighborhood vibes become hurtful as they trigger his guilt. Simultaneously, Abdullah encounters a friendship with an Egyptian street food vendor, colleague, and roommate, EZZ (32), whose life revolves around the dream of traveling to Europe. Based on EZZ's advice, Abdullah decides to apply for the "Blue Card" to be eligible for refugee resettlement in Europe, taking advantage of his family's suffering narrative. His plan works, and he gets his card; however, his relationship with a mysterious guest in the nursing home, Muhab (75), and EZZ's miserable end lead him toward redemption and acceptance, deciding to stay in Egypt and return to Sudan later.

Director's note BLUE CARD is a film that deeply touches on feelings of displacement and searching for one's true self. It's not only about the struggles of being a refugee but also about feeling lost and disconnected in life.

As the director, I felt compelled to tell this story because it reflects my own journey. When I moved from Sudan to Cairo, I was surrounded by people but still felt alone. This

feeling of being caught between two worlds is what Abdullah goes through. His story is my story - a search for belonging and understanding who we are.

Paul, the writer, and Amjad, the producer, are essential to bringing this film to life. Paul's writing captures Abdullah's struggles and dreams, drawing from real experiences of trying to find hope and meaning. Amjad's role as producer helps us show these experiences with honesty and care.

Visually, the film contrasts the overwhelming life in Cairo with familiar memories of Sudan. The camera follows Abdullah closely, showing his internal battles and connections he forms. Simple symbols, like the blue card and the origami, represent his efforts to find hope and redefine himself.

BLUE CARD is more than just a film; it's a heartfelt exploration of finding one's place in the world and understanding the impact of feeling out of place. It's about the universal search for home and the courage to keep going, even when everything feels uncertain.

Director: Mohammed Alomd'a
Producers: Station Films (Sudan);
Mayana Films (Germany)
German WCF partner: Mayana Films

Funding amount: 40.000 €



LOST SONGS

Canciones Perdidas

by Kiro Russo

BOLIVIA

Synopsis The mine is still there. Imposing, silent, waiting. Charque returns to Huanuni after years. His lungs are heavy, his body weaker, but his mind remains trapped in the rhythm of the drill and the tremor of the earth. He walks through dusty streets, past barracks where miners smoke in the shadows. His friends and his band are still there, but he is no longer the same. The mine has forgotten him. Nights grow longer. In dreams, he descends through tunnels he doesn't recognize, hears his own breath echoing off wet stone. He wakes up choking, hands covered in dust. Pescado tells him the mine is no longer for him. But the mine calls. A man appears in the shadows- an engineer, a scientist. He offers an experiment: to connect Charque's body to the mountain, to feel the earth on his skin. Charque agrees. On the day of the descent, something shifts. The drill resonates in his chest. Sweat merges with stone, stone with flesh. In an instant, everything disappears. His body stiffens. The silver vein grows. The scientists smile. On the surface, Pescado seeks answers, but no one knows where Charque has gone. Only the vein continues to grow, and in each ingot extracted, a mark resembles the scars of a human body.

Director's note Each film I have directed addresses a specific aspect of the Bolivian mining world, and my friends from Huanuni are always the protagonists. They have guided

the themes and inspired the stories. We have been exploring cinematic devices that remain coherent with the realities portrayed while prioritizing "cinematographic elements": precise framing and a mise-en-scène that creates a documentary-based, sensory experience.

My goal is to create reflective, poetic cinema, convinced that political strength today lies in how we represent the world in images and words, and how we position ourselves amid the saturation of moving pictures, believing that cinema, like any great art, can show something beyond reality and fiction. In Bolivia, miners have been central in revolutions and protests, embodying a history of unionism and militancy, as well as stories of decadence, slavery, and pollution. In good times and bad, they have shaped our history and identity. Mines are crossroads of cultures and eras: old indigenous customs persist while minerals sustain the money-driven, ultra-capitalist world of today.

Director: Kiro Russo

Producers: Socavón (Bolivia); Nabis Film Berlin GmbH (Germany); Grandfilm Produktion GmbH (Germany); Nabis Filmgroup GmbH (Austria); Board Cadre films (Switzerland)
German WCF partner: Nabis Film Berlin GmbH

Funding amount: 60.000 €



KIDS SWIMMING IN THE LAKE

Muchachos Bañándose en el Lago
by Michael Labarca

VENEZUELA

Synopsis During a long blackout in Venezuela, the siblings DAYANA (11), DIEGO (8) and DEYANIRA (6) dream of leaving the country and reuniting with their father, who crossed the border promising a reunion. Meanwhile, their mother CHIQUI (38) won't leave her bedroom.

Wandering the neighborhood, the children adapt their games to the darkness: taking turns on the cell phone until the battery dies; telling time by the sky; escaping the heat in the car their father left behind and watching teenagers swim in the oil-tainted lake he forbade them to visit.

To reunite with him, the family must sell the car. While waiting for a buyer, the siblings watch friends and neighbors leave one by one. These farewells and absences force DAYANA to grow prematurely. She feels their father has forgotten them, while CHIQUI remains distant. The little girl does not understand her mother's strange sadness, who does nothing to encourage the family to leave the country and be together again.

As her reality unfolds, DAYANA accepts that some can decide, others cannot. The children, with no friends in their ghost town, begin to consider breaking the rules left behind by their father.

Director's note What happens to those who stay behind? How do they cope as others leave? How does a child perceive an abandoned country they still inhabit?

My intention is to focus on children who have assimilated their context's shortcomings. As children we have a power we lose as adults: the ability to play - something that distanced but never saved us from adult mistakes. Some realities force us to lose that power early to survive. My characters face social and economic adversity, the absence of their father, their mother's worry, and constant farewells that suggest a better world elsewhere.

The grief of Dayana for having no choice - whether to stay or leave - is what I want to capture. My need to make this film comes from my own mourning for having lost my country and the people I left behind. This crisis is not only Venezuelan; it reflects many countries marked by migration's consequences.

Director: Michael Labarca

Producers: Todos los Ríos (Venezuela); Black Forest Films GmbH (Germany); Ticket Shoot Films (France); Bubbles Project (Brazil); Oro Films (Chile)

German WCF partner: Black Forest Films GmbH

Funding amount: 40.000 €

MY FATHER'S ESTATE

Os Dez Terrenos de Meu Pai
by Liliana Sulzbach

BRAZIL

Synopsis MY FATHER'S ESTATE is an investigative documentary that uncovers the stories of the families of German immigrant Johannes Sulzbach and the enslaved woman Joana Guedes in a region of Brazil shaped by European settlement. The film searches for their present-day descendants and challenges the idea that the identity of southern Brazil was built solely through the labor and discipline of European immigrants. Through previously unknown facts, it unveils hidden aspects of the state's official history.

Director's note I have always been interested in how storytellers shape their narratives – what they choose to carry and what they leave behind.

While researching my ancestors, I wanted to understand why Johannes left Germany and how free immigrants, supposedly detached from slavery, contributed to a region still rooted in enslaved labor. The version taught in schools glorifies European immigrants as the motor of progress, a narrative now used by far right groups to exclude others and protect privileges. Academic studies have already challenged this myth, but official symbols ignore it, preserving a whitened identity.

The growing conservatism in the region compelled me to uncover what truly happened. School history omits Indigenous and Black communities, although immigrants and Black people, mostly enslaved, worked and lived closely. The story of Joana Guedes,

brought to Brazil as a child, showed me that I could not tell my own story without hers.

In dialogue with the cowriters Taiasmin Ohnmacht and Eliane Marques, we decided to tell this story together. Our partnership aims to reveal silenced narratives, take an Afro centered perspective, and treat enslaved people and their descendants not as victims but as historical agents. We seek dialogue rather than conflict - a film told from multiple viewpoints.

For this project, we chose to structure the story from the present, combining creative storytelling with investigative research to contextualize historical and legal materials through broader artistic perspectives.

Director: Liliana Sulzbach
Producers: Tempo Porto Alegre (Brazil); Weltfilm GmbH (Germany)
German WCF partner: Weltfilm GmbH

Funding amount: 30.000 €

A silhouette of a man stands on a balcony or rooftop, looking out over a city at night. The city lights are visible in the background, including a prominent building with a tower and a car on a road below. The scene is dimly lit, with the man's form dark against the lighter city lights.

SURAIYA

by Robiul Alam Robi

BANGLADESH

Synopsis Monsur, a 33-year-old man hiding in a cheap Dhaka hotel, dreams of escaping his fugitive life. He receives a job offer at a Turkish shoe factory, which requires basic knowledge of Turkish. He has three months to learn the language. He enrolls in a language center, where he meets Suraiya, his only classmate, a young woman with a secret personal errand.

Guided by an eccentric tutor named Bashar, they begin learning Turkish. Suraiya wants to go to Turkey in search of her estranged boyfriend. During the course, Monsur finds himself drawn to her, and their infatuation becomes mutual. Halfway through, the tutor stops showing up. They eventually discover that what they have learned is not Turkish at all, but an entirely invented language. Monsur loses the job opportunity; Suraiya, however, receives her visa.

The lovers realize they now possess a language only the two of them can speak. To keep it exclusive, Monsur tracks down the tutor. Suraiya leaves the country, promising to meet him by the Aegean Sea.

Director's note In SURAIYA, I seek to explore the experience of being an outsider in Dhaka, a city where diverse cultures, histories, and emotions collide. The characters in the film embody the residues of historical and political displacement. The city's tropical heat, dense population, and unpredictable rhythms serve as a backdrop to their personal quests for solace,

mirroring a larger societal search for belonging.

The film delves into themes of language, love, and the tension between hyper-rationality and raw emotion. Interactions between the protagonists reflect the complexities of communication in a city where meaning often gets lost in translation, and where love can be both a source of solace and conflict, comfort and tension. Through this narrative, I intend to offer a cinematic experience that speaks to the heart of human existence: its contradictions, desires, and the fragile pursuit of connection.

Director: Robiul Alam Robi
Producers: Ratherhood Initiatives Ltd (Bangladesh); Made in Banialulu (Bangladesh); NiKo Film (Germany)

Funding amount: 40.000 €



THE BLUE SWEATER WITH A YELLOW HOLE

Блакитний світ із жовтою діркою
by Tetiana Khodakivska

UKRAINE

Synopsis TRUE STORY OF LIES

BLUE SWEATER WITH A YELLOW HOLE is a coming-of-age documentary that weaves together animation, observational cinema, and participatory filmmaking.

The film follows Ukrainian children as they process and draw memories of their six months in a Russian “re-education” camp.

Taisa has large, sad eyes and prefers silence. Kyrylo is a mischievous rebel, his freckles and dimples making him charming even as he breaks things or innocently asks for a cigarette. What begins as cheerful activities and freedom from parents slowly changes. Their memories reveal propaganda events, punishments, isolation, psychiatric clinics, military training, and difficult choices about whether to collaborate. Later they ask: How did this seem normal?

To simulate propaganda, the story uses reverse dramaturgy. It starts by portraying the camp positively, gradually revealing its true nature, culminating in the children’s attempts to break free. Animation immerses the viewer in shifting identity and belonging, reflecting the impact of misinformation.

Director’s note My motivation for this project is fear. In 2014, while co-directing a piece on the occupation of Crimea, I spent hours watching Russian fake news. After two weeks, my mind began to accept some of the lies as “believable.” I was terrified by this inner betrayal.

In 2022, researching children’s deportation while co-curating an exhibition of Ukrainian

contemporary art in New York, I saw Alevtina Kakhidze’s work projected live. Everything clicked: animation. From the beginning, I wanted to work closely with the children, letting them portray events through colours and forms they draw. It becomes a healing process and allows them to own their stories.

During development, we met 72 rescued children who went through detention and indoctrination. Drawing with them, seeing happiness mixed with Russian narratives, I remembered reciting Soviet poetry about Lenin as a child. In the poem he was a “clever-eyed boy,” while in reality he was killing my great-grandfather. This repetition struck me again when Kyrylo drew himself singing a song about Russia while bombs fell on his parents in Kher-son. It explains why ethical storytelling is essential. I should end with humour to show the film will have it, but instead I’ll share a secret: last year my 68-year-old mother near Kyiv fell in love during missile attacks. Watching her blush reminded me one can still “fall up.” So yes – there will be love and humour in this film. I promise.

Director: Tetiana Khodakivska
Producers: Pronto Film (Ukraine); Maur Films (Czech Republic); Girelle Production (France); DogHouse Films (Luxembourg); United Senses GmbH (Germany)
German WCF partner: United Senses GmbH

Funding amount: 30.000 €



THE SIREN SONG

El Canto de la Sirena
by Eden Bernal Ponce

MEXICO

Synopsis At the desert's edge in North-western Mexico, lies a remote coast called Los Algodones. Yaqui people say that a mysterious song draws men into the deep sea, never allowing them to return. But when Mercedes (85) and Armida (80) Valenzuela followed that song, they found the place where they truly belong. wSince childhood, they searched for a place where they could feel beloved, safe and free. They did not find it until they were forty. From then on, they camped for long periods in Los Algodones, collecting oysters for a living, freeing themselves from their partners' violence and raising twelve children each with the little they earned selling shellfish.

Now the sisters have become too old to reach the coast by themselves, and no one wants to take two old women with early Alzheimer's and anaemia to such a harsh area. At home they no longer have a voice. There they feel invisible and trapped in a routine of making tortillas, watching TV and cleaning. That's why they crave the coast even more.

Although Los Algodones is inhospitable, the beach is their home. Armida swims joyfully, and while Mercedes does not know how to swim. However, it is her who boldly claims they "own the sea" and will die there. Then, they will become sirens and remain forever.

The film has followed their fishing camps over the last ten years, during which they cross the desert, visit rivers and estuaries, fish, cook and sleep out in the open. As they talk about their childhood, adulthood and old age, they

share with us what they gained and lost by living on their own terms. This is a story about resilience in a society where old women's fate often seems to be limited to poverty, exploitation or oblivion.

Director's note Both of my grandmothers raised me, coming from a rural environment similar to that of my protagonists. They shaped my desire to understand the circumstances that defined their lives, but they died before I could ask them. Meeting the Valenzuela sisters ten years ago at Los Algodones allowed me to continue that search. As we grew closer, they agreed their stories should be told to encourage more women to live on their own terms.

As a male director, this project allows me to rethink my relationship to women and understand the situation of women in rural Latin America. THE SIREN SONG aims to capture and share the stories of women who break stereotypes to liberate themselves.

Director: Eden Bernal Ponce
Producers: Sinapsis (Mexico); Autentika Films (Germany); The Lady Improper (Hong Kong); Estación Marte Films (Mexico); Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía (Mexico)
German WCF partner: Autentika Films

Funding amount: 30.000 €



TO LEAVE, TO STAY

Neak Tov, Neak Nov
by Danech San

CAMBODIA

Synopsis Mera and Bopha, both 18 years old, live on a small Cambodian fishing island. Mera travels to visit a soldier that she met online. The next morning, Mera has vanished. Bopha must learn to live without her.

Director's note TO LEAVE, TO STAY, my first feature film, began with a feeling I have carried since my youth. Growing up in a small town in northwest Cambodia, I felt a persistent longing to live independently, and to discover who I was beyond family expectations. Leaving alone as a young woman brought fear, doubt, and invisible barriers, formed over generations by family, tradition, and the social realities that have long governed the lives of women in Cambodia.

When I first visited Koh Sdach, a small fishing island on the Cambodian coast, those feelings resurfaced. The island became a mirror of my own memories: a space of yearning for freedom, where one imagines another life without knowing how to claim it. Over the past six years, I have returned often, deepening my relationship with the community while witnessing rapid transformations not only on Koh Sdach but across the surrounding islands: luxury developments, family displacements, and young people beginning to dream of futures beyond the sea.

Within this exchange between my own memories and the island's evolving reality, the idea for the film took shape. While I feel an urgency to capture this moment of change, I am most drawn to the more intimate question:

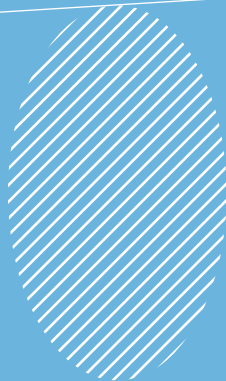
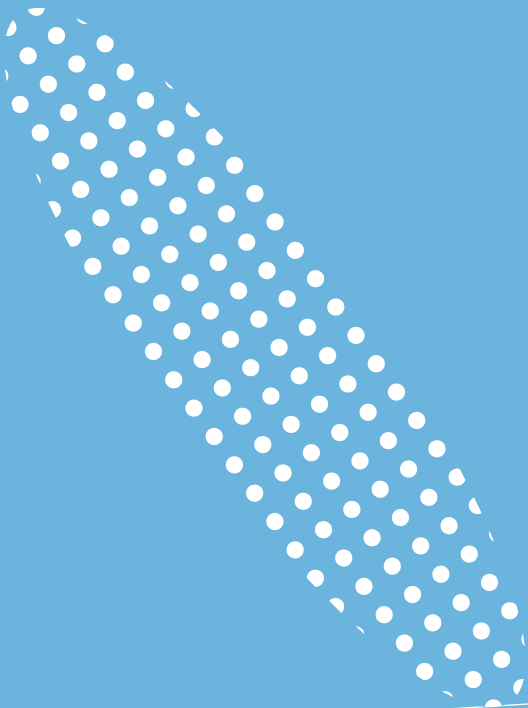
what do the islanders truly desire?

TO LEAVE, TO STAY follows two young women whose stories reflect the very questions I once asked myself. Mera is fierce, refusing to let tradition or expectation define her in a culture where arranged marriage still moves beneath the surface. When Mera disappears, her best friend Bopha is left behind, navigating life without her friend and confronting the void that absence leaves. By blurring presence and absence, spoken and unspoken, the film quietly builds tension and reflects how much of their world is shared and how much remains out of reach. The film unfolds in three parts, reflecting the passage of time and the evolution of identity.

Through Mera and Bopha, I explore the dreams and uncertainties of Cambodia's younger generation, coming of age in a moment of massive transition. TO LEAVE, TO STAY is not just about leaving or staying; it asks what we owe to tradition, family, and ourselves, how a place informs our sense of belonging, and whether new futures can be imagined from within familiar landscapes.

Director: Danech San
Producers: Anti-Archive (Cambodia); Aspara Films (France); Weydemann Bros. Film (Germany); Kawan Kawan Media (Indonesia)
German WCF partner: Weydemann Bros. Film GmbH

Funding amount: 60.000 €





CULEBRA CUT

Corte Culebra
by Ana Elena Tejera

PANAMA

Synopsis In 2000, following a century of American occupation, Panama regained control of the Canal Zone territory. A Panamanian soldier enters the old military bases for the first time. While assigned to clean an artificial lake, he stumbles upon a mysterious woman in the jungle. She is revealed to be the former leader of the Culebra community's resistance who had once fought against forced displacement. Their encounter sparks a journey of personal transformation, forcing the soldier to confront his own roots.

by listening to the earth and to the deep scars we carry within.

Director's note When I was 9, like many Panamanians, I entered the former Canal Zone for the first time. It was a land of military bases and invisible borders. That moment etched itself into my body, into my gut. How do we inhabit a land from which we were displaced for over a century? How do we carry the legacy of fourteen military bases and minefields, a burden we never chose? This is the conflict of my country, and of Ernesto: to be mestizo, caught between an identity that no longer exists and one that was never truly ours. A fractured sense of belonging. The film searches for a cinematic language born from a territory shaped by occupation. It moves through shadowed spaces where latent violence brushes against tenderness, asking how bodies remember what nations choose to forget. Corte Culebra is Ernesto's return to a wounded land. It is a political and intimate portrait that insists reconciliation must begin

Director: Ana Elena Tejera
Producers: Mestizo Cinema (Corte Culebra, S.A.) (Panama); Fulgurance (France); Capicúa SPA (Chile)
European WCF partner: Fulgurance (France)

Funding amount: 50.000 €



DEAR TARKOVSKY

by Firas Khoury

PALESTINE

Synopsis Farouk, a 35-year-old filmmaker in Ramallah, dreams of making his debut feature, *A Bridge to Jaffa*, a Tarkovsky-inspired film about Palestinian resistance. After years of failed attempts to secure funding, he's stuck working at a wedding film service, churning out tacky productions for clients with no artistic sense. Desperate, he hatches a plan with his greedy boss, Zaki, to woo Yasmine, the daughter of Ramallah's wealthiest man, hoping her father will finance his film. But what begins as a con quickly spirals out of control when Farouk unexpectedly falls for Yasmine and finds himself embroiled in a series of events that change his life. Along the way, Farouk confronts the limits of his ambition, his sense of integrity, and the harsh realities of living under occupation, while navigating a love story he never saw coming.

Director's note In many ways, the story of the main character, Farouk, is my own story. I am a 40-year-old Palestinian film director, and I struggled for more than 10 years to make my first feature film. My country is not recognized and I have no local film funds, which makes it almost impossible to get a film made.

Aware of the similarity between the main character and myself, I was initially scared to bring this story to life; but the challenge kept me going. Though I entered it doubtful, I now feel more confident than ever. I want to make the film personal, tragic and ironic – much like our daily reality. I am eager to tell this story of

Palestinian artists living under occupation and struggling to express themselves.

Andrei Tarkovsky's years in exile were very tragic, and the pain expressed through his later work - especially the character of Andrei in the film *Nostalgia* - is the pain of a struggling artist whose exile is killing him. Farouk, in the script, has no place to escape to, confined within the military borders of Israeli occupation, and in a society which has reached new levels of cultural malformations and contradictions: Farouk feels in exile in his own home.

DEAR TARKOVSKY is the story of an imprisoned artist, an artist who is unable to perform his art. In the script, film director Farouk feels he has a lot to say, but the world around him prevents him from artistically flourishing. My hope is that if Farouk cannot find the way to express his art, I will.

Director: Firas Khoury

Producers: Atlas Vision (Tunisia); Fikra (Jordan/Sweden); Fox in the Snow (Sweden); Dugong Films (Italy); Player Films (France)
European WCF partner: Fox in the Snow (Sweden)

Funding amount: 50.000 €



GOD AND THE DEVIL'S CUMBIA

Dios y la cumbia del diablo
by Carlos Lenin

MEXICO

Synopsis Set in northern Mexico, DIOS Y LA CUMBIA DEL DIABLO follows Xul (17), a teenager growing up amid narco-culture, limited opportunities, and the omnipresence of violence. He dreams of becoming a famous musician and escaping to Los Angeles, even though he has no real talent. Along with his best friends, Nata (17) and Mauri (16), he plays in a corridos tumbados band, clinging to the belief that faith – or a pact with the Devil – might change his fate.

After a humiliating performance, Xul invokes the Devil in a moment of despair. Soon after, the band is invited to play at a private party hosted by Diablito (17), a charismatic teenage hitman linked to a local cartel. Xul is drawn into Diablito's world – one that blends violence, desire, and the promise of escape. A fragile love triangle forms, testing loyalty, friendship, and ambition.

As Xul seeks a way out through music and power, he betrays Diablito by aligning with a rival cartel, triggering a violent chain of events. Caught between rival criminal groups, the military, and his own moral limits, Xul is forced to confront the true cost of his wishes. When faced with an ultimate choice between love, survival, and ambition, Xul crosses a point of no return.

Director's note Several years ago, I was kidnapped by a group of hitmen in my hometown. They mistook me for a member of a rival cartel. I was interrogated, beaten, and taken to

the desert, convinced I was about to die – until a teenage hitman recognized me and saved my life. I never knew his name.

That experience is the emotional origin of DIOS Y LA CUMBIA DEL DIABLO. The film is a coming-of-age story that moves between realism and the symbolic, shaped by the way violence has become normalized for young people in northern Mexico. Rather than portraying the war on drugs from a distance, I wanted to explore how it is lived internally – through love, faith, desire, and contradiction.

I approach this story as a teenage epic: intimate, emotional, and grounded in lived experience. Visually and narratively, the film balances everyday reality with a spiritual universe that reflects the inner lives of its characters. I call this perspective Melancolía Tumbada – a way of inhabiting the world shaped by corridos tumbados, music born from a generation raised inside an endless conflict.

This film is not about heroes or villains, but about young people searching for meaning in a world where the boundaries between good and evil are painfully blurred.

Director: Carlos Lenin
Producers: Huasteca Films (Mexico); Colectivo Colmena (Mexico); Potenza Producciones SL (Spain); Piano (Mexico)
European WCF partner: Potenza Producciones SL (Spain)

Funding amount: 45.000 €



THE MOTORCYCLE SMUGGLER

Le Parcours
by Arice Siapi

CAMEROON

Synopsis Bana Manga, spent a decade smuggling motorcycles across the borders of Nigeria, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic before turning his back on that life to follow his true passion: music. Though he becomes a local star in Adamaoua, a region in northern Cameroon, life as an artist is not enough to provide for his family. Determined to change his fate, he sets out to record the album that could finally launch his career. But to finance this dream, he is forced to return to what he knows best, embarking once more on a dangerous journey along the remote trails between Nigeria and Cameroon, riding alongside motorcycle smugglers..

Director's note I was born and raised in Ngaoundéré, in the predominantly Muslim region of Adamaoua in north central Cameroon. In 2013, I met Bana Manga. A former motorcycle smuggler who had survived several near death experiences, he had left that dangerous path to dedicate himself to music. In his songs he captured with candor the hardships faced by smugglers on their journeys. The contrast between his tumultuous past and his present life as an artist fascinated me. I was drawn to the mystery of these two opposing sides of his identity.

THE MOTORCYCLE SMUGGLER spotlights the youth of Cameroon's Adamaoua region, where poverty, limited opportunities and unemployment push many into dangerous and precarious jobs. Many young people resort

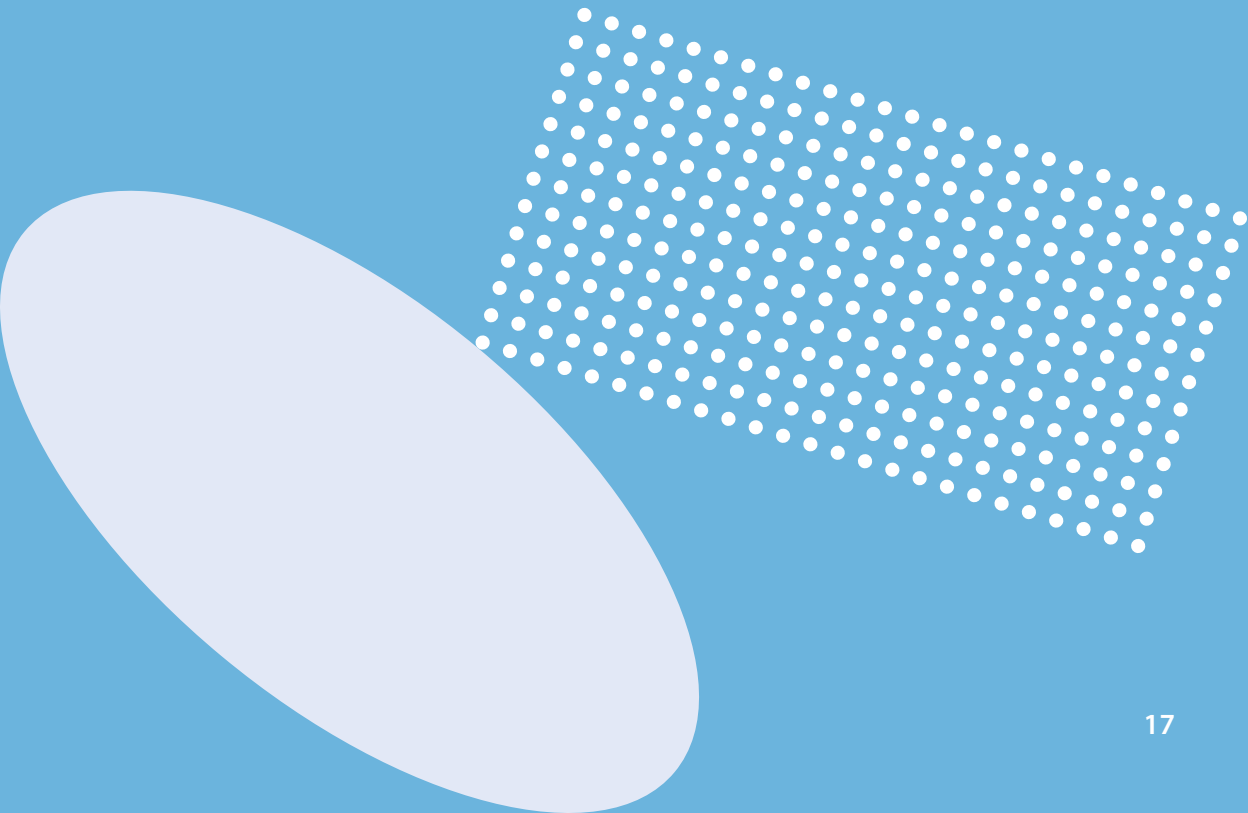
to buying and reselling motorcycles illegally between Nigeria, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic. The journeys are perilous, and many lose their lives. Yet within this dangerous world, these young men have created their own forms of resilience. Their "tontines," collective savings associations, allow them to support one another, survive accidents, and, in some cases, eventually leave trafficking behind.

After ten years in this life, Bana turned to his true passion: music. But in Cameroon, making a living as an artist is also fraught with obstacles – lack of professional structures and legal protection, irregular wages, family pressure, and personal doubts. Bana's character enables us to grasp the reality of an artist's life and the intricacies of the local music business.

The film's central narrative – Bana's search for financing to produce an album – serves as a lens through which to explore a deeper issue: the extremely high rate of youth unemployment in Cameroon. Through Bana, I want to illuminate the daily reality of young people whose solidarity, courage and hope remain the only way out.

Director: Arice Siapi
Producers: Timeline (Cameroon); Dryades Films (France); Naoko Films (Belgium)
European WCF partner: Dryades Films (France)

Funding amount: 30.000 €





PLASTIC ATLANTIS

by Samira Vera-Cruz

CAPE VERDE

Synopsis On the northern shores of the Cape Verdean archipelago, a new invader washes up: plastic. But for filmmaker and scuba diver Samira Vera-Cruz, this crisis runs deeper than pollution. The Atlantic is a carrier of memory - a living archive of journeys, ruptures, and resistance.

Born in Cabo Verde, a Creole nation shaped by both African and European ancestries, Samira carries a complex legacy. To be Creole is to live with contradiction: the pain of ancestors who were enslaved, and the guilt of those who enslaved. The same ocean currents that once carried enslaved people from Senegal to Brazil, passing through Cabo Verde, now transport plastic waste - transforming a historic route of human suffering into a corridor of ecological neglect. Through a series of dives - both literal and metaphorical - Samira explores how environmental destruction and historical erasure are deeply connected. Guided by marine biologist Ana Veiga and historian António Correia e Silva, she traces fragile links between memory, identity, and survival.

PLASTIC ATLANTIS is a poetic, political, and personal journey - one that dares to imagine healing. For in understanding who we are, we begin to understand our place in nature - and how to better protect it.

Director's note As a Cape Verdean, I've spent my life navigating the ambiguity of identity - never quite belonging, always seen as something else. This fluid sense of self mirrors the

ocean that surrounds us: carrier of bodies, memory, and now plastic. When I was a child, my 11-years-old brother convinced me that plastic bags came from trees. That image of plastic flying around and getting caught on acacias branches is still quite present in Cabo Verde.

PLASTIC ATLANTIS draws from personal memories, childhood myths, and family conversations to weave a visual and narrative journey across the Atlantic. Plastic drifting in ocean currents becomes both a metaphor and a mirror - echoing the routes of the slave trade, colonial trauma, and ecological collapse.

Through poetic narration and immersive seascapes, the film explores how the same waters that once took so much from us now return what we discard - from Senegal to Cabo Verde and then to Brazil. It's an intimate reflection on identity, ancestry, and the urgent need to listen to the ocean's warnings.

Through their stories, the film uncovers intergenerational pain and the urgent need to dismantle prejudices. It raises profound questions: Can healing occur without forgetting? What do we preserve for the future after an apocalypse?"

Director: Samira Vera-Cruz

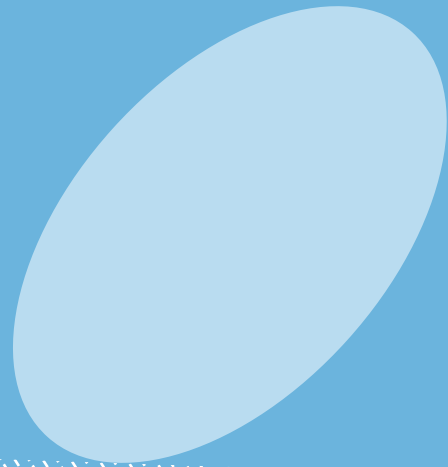
Producers: KS Cinema (Cape Verde); Seera films GmbH (Germany); STEPS Generation Africa 2.0 (South Africa); MAAT Produções (Brazil); Gorée Cinema (Senegal)

Funding amount: 40.000 €



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DRY LEAF

სმელი ფოთოლი
by Alexandre Koberidze



GEORGIA, 2025

Director: Alexandre Koberidze
Producers: Alexandre Koberidze (Georgia), New Matter Films GmbH (Germany)
German distributor: Grandfilm GmbH
World sales: Heretic (Greece)
Theatrical release in Germany: Jun / Jul 2026

Funded in the WCF Jury meeting in September 2025
Funding amount: 10.000 €

THE MYSTERIOUS GAZE OF THE FLAMINGO

LA MISTERIOSA MIRADA DEL FLAMENCO
by Diego Céspedes



CHILE, 2025

Director: Diego Céspedes
Producers: Quijote Films (Chile), Les Valseurs (France), Irusoin (Spain), Wrong Men (Belgium), Weydemann Bros (Germany)
German distributor: Filmreederei GmbH
World Sales: Charades (France)
Theatrical release in Germany: December 4, 2025

Funded in the WCF Jury meeting in September 2025
Funding amount: 10.000 €

Synopsis Lisa, a photographer, goes missing. The last information on Lisa is that she's been photographing football stadiums in seven different villages all over Georgia. Her dad Irakli decides to search for her and travels to those places. Levani, Lisa's best friend and an invisible person, sets off to help. As the scenery changes from one football stadium to another, people change and people's stories change. Tensions build up on those simple and sometimes fun adventures, as every football pit and every village travelled leaves less of a chance to find Lisa at all.

Director's Note Dry leaves are gentle, fragile and a bit sad – our film should be like dry leaves are. "Dry Leaf" is a football term too, it means a journey of the ball with an unpredictable ending - same is with the journey of our protagonists.

World premiere Locarno Film Festival 2025, *Competition*

Key festivals and awards Special Mention, Locarno Film Festival 2025; Toronto International Film Festival 2025; Busan International Film Festival 2025; BFI London Film Festival 2025

Synopsis In the early 80', in the Chilean desert, eleven-year-old Lidia grows up in a loving queer family pushed on the edge of an unwelcoming dusty mining town. They are blamed for a mysterious illness that's starting to spread - said to be passed through a single gaze, when one man falls in love with another. In this modern western, Lidia leads a quest for vengeance, facing violence, fear and hatred, where family is her only refuge and love might be the real danger.

World premiere Cannes International Film Festival 2025, *Un Certain Regard*

Key festivals and awards Grand Prix Un Certain Regard, Cannes International Film Festival 2025; Karlovy Vary 2025; Melbourne International Film Festival 2025; San Sebastián International Film Festival 2025; Filmfest Hamburg 2025

A USEFUL GHOST

ผี ไข่ ใต้ ค่ะ Pee Chai Dai Ka

by Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke



THAILAND, 2025

Director: Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke
Producers: Haut les Mains Productions (France), Mayana Films (Germany), Momo Film Co (Singapore), N8 Studios Co (Thailand)
German distributor: Little Dream Pictures GmbH
World sales: Best Friend Forever (Belgium)
Theatrical release in Germany: March 26, 2026
Funded in December 2025
Funding amount: 10.000 €

Synopsis Rising dust levels prompt an academic lady-boy to buy a new vacuum cleaner. The vacuum behaves strangely - sucking dust by day, spitting it out by night. Repairman Krong suspects it's possessed and recalls a haunted factory owned by Suman, whose son March lost his wife Nat to pollution-related disease. Nat returns as a ghost in the vacuum, reuniting with March against his family's objections. Meanwhile, Suman's factory faces chaos from another ghost. Nat realizes the real problem isn't dust and sets out to banish useless ghosts to prove her worth.

Director's Note DUST is a metaphor for Thai people treated as mere dust, easily swept away by the ruling class. Actual dust pollution has plagued Thailand for years - people joke, "No wonder there's dust; our country is full of dust." The line between literal and allegorical dust has blurred. A USEFUL GHOST is about human dust suffering injustice and ghosts who return to fight back.

World premiere Cannes International Film Festival 2025, *Semaine de la Critique*

Key festivals and awards Best Screenplay, Sitges Festival of Fantastic Films 2025; Artistic Asian New Wave Best Picture and Achievement Award for Production Design, QCinema International Film Festival 2025 ; London Film Festival 2025

AISHA CAN'T FLY AWAY

AISHA LA TASTAE'A AL TAYRAN

by Morad Mostafa



EGYPT, 2025

Director: Morad Mostafa
Producers: Nomadis Images (Tunisia), MAD Solutions (Egypt), Mayana Films (Germany), A.A Films (Egypt), Station Films (Sudan)
German distributor: Rapid Eye Movies HE GmbH
World sales: MAD World (Egypt)
Theatrical release in Germany: January 15, 2026
Funded in December 2025
Funding amount: 8.000 €

Synopsis Aisha, a 26-year-old Somali caregiver, navigates life in Cairo, in the underworld of African migrant communities and simmering tensions between groups. Trapped in relentless pressure, monotonous routines, and unfulfilling work, she also struggles with the ambiguity of a complex relationship. As her dreams blur with reality, Aisha reaches a crossroads, facing an emotional and existential impasse.

Director's Note The idea for this film began with a moment etched in my memory. On a microbus, I noticed an African girl, exhausted, head against the glass, asleep beside me. She woke, frightened and crying, startling the passengers, then hurried off without a word. That encounter became the seed of this project. For days I kept thinking about her—her reaction, what was in her mind. I imagined dreams and nightmares intertwined with Cairo's harsh realities. If the city is cruel to its people, how much harder for newcomers?

World premiere Cannes International Film Festival 2025, *Un Certain Regard*

Key festivals and awards FIPRESCI Award, Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival 2025; Filmfest Hamburg 2025; Durban International Film Festival 2025

IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT

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